

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DHAHRA 00571 020858Z

ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EB-04 INR-05 DODE-00 PM-03

L-01 SP-02 CIAE-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 /037 W

-----128231 020907Z /14

O R 020830Z APR 78

FM AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6212

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L DHAHRAN 0571

LIMDIS

FOR AMBASSADOR WEST

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, PEPR, SA

SUBJECT: VISIT TO WASHINGTON BY ARAMCO CHAIRMAN KELBERER

1. JUST BEFORE LEAVING DHAHRAN, ARAMCO CHAIRMAN JOHN KELBERER TOLD ME HE PLANS TO ATTEND ARAMCO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN NEW YORK MAY 1 THROUGH 3 AND THEN TO SPEND PART OF MAY 4 AND ALL OF MAY 5 IN WASHINGTON TO DISCUSS WITH CONGRESSMAN ZABLOCKI AND A FEW OTHER KEY PEOPLE ON THE HILL THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF A FAVORABLE F-15 DECISION. KELBERER REALIZES THAT THESE CALLS MUST BE HANDLED VERY CAREFULLY AND DISCREETLY, AND THAT THEY COULD EASILY BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE AND RESULT IN PRESS OR CONGRESSIONAL COMPLAINTS ABOUT US "BIG OIL" IN COMBINATION WITH ARAB OIL ATTEMPTING TO INFLUENCE CONGRESSIONAL DECISIONS. HE HAS WEIGHED THE RISKS CAREFULLY, HOWEVER, AND BELIEVES THAT A CAREFUL, DISCREET EFFORT IS WORTH THE RISKS. HIS DECISION TAKES INTO CONSIDERATION THE FACT THAT ARAMCO WAS RECENTLY REQUESTED BY MINISTRY OF COMMERCE SOLAIM (SPEAKING FOR CROWN PRINCE FAHD) TO ENSURE THAT ARAMCO AND OTHER LEADING AMERICAN BUSINESSES OPERAT-
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PAGE 02 DHAHRA 00571 020858Z

ING IN SAUDI ARABIA TAKE A STAND ON THE F-15 SALE.

2. YOU WILL RECALL THAT THE CROWN PRINCE MADE A SIMILAR REQUEST TO KELBERER'S PREDECESSOR, FRANK JUNGERS, IN DECEMBER 1976. JUNGERS AT THAT TIME RESPONDED FAVORABLY AND CALLED ON THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF SOME 70 U.S. FIRMS IN JANUARY 1977 TO URGE THEM TO USE ANY INFLUENCE

THEY HAD WITH THE CONGRESS TO DISCOURAGE PASSAGE OF AN ANTI-BOYCOTT BILL. JUNGERS VISITED WASHINGTON BRIEFLY DURING THAT TRIP AND MET WITH THEN SECRETARY-DESIGNATE VANCE.

3. THE COMMERCE MINISTER ALSO MADE THE SAME APPROACH RECENTLY TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN'S ASSOCIATION IN THE EASTERN PROVINCE, URGING THAT U.S. FIRMS MAKE THEIR VIEWS KNOWN TO THEIR CONGRESSMEN CONCERNING THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF A FAVORABLE F-15 DECISION.

4. YOU MAY WISH TO SEE KELBERER IN NEW YORK OR WASHINGTON IN ORDER TO DISCUSS ENERGY ISSUES OR HIS WASHINGTON SCHEDULE. JIM KNIGHT WILL BE MAKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR KELBERER, BUT YOUR INSIGHT WOULD BE USEFUL IN BOTH INCREASING THE IMPACT AND REDUCING THE RISKS OF THE WASHINGTON MEETINGS. THIS TRIP MIGHT ALSO BE A GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR KELBERER TO MEET:

1. SENIOR DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS, OUR ENERGY SPECIALISTS, AND OFFICIALS SUCH AS SECRETARY SCHLESINGER AND SECRETARY BLUMENTHAL WHO HAVE MET KELBERER HERE IN SAUDI ARABIA.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BUSINESSMEN, PETROLEUM INDUSTRY, FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, VISITS, NEGOTIATIONS, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DHAHRA00571
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780186-0544
Format: TEL
From: DHAHRAN
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197804101/aaaadifx.tel
Line Count: 85
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 2a5335a6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2820703
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VISIT TO WASHINGTON BY ARAMCO CHAIRMAN KELBERER
TAGS: ENRG, PEPR, SA, ARAMCO, (KELBERER, JOHN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/2a5335a6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014